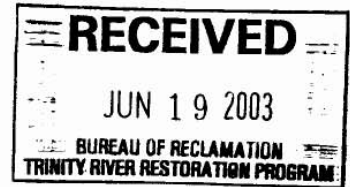


Jerome C. Hauke  
 Registered Civil Engineer  
 License No C13071  
 P. O. Box 400  
 Douglas City, CA 96024



JUNE 19, 2003

Trinity River Restoration Program  
 P.O. Box 1300,  
 Weaverville, CA 96093

RE: Draft EA/EIR Trinity River Bridges Project  
 Salt Flat Bridge--Comment Number Six

Gentlemen:

The draft EA/EIR is silent on the impact of increased property values in the Salt Flat subdivision due to the construction of a new bridge.

Increased property values and the corresponding higher property taxes will come about in two stages.

1. The assessed value of each of the approximately Salt Flat 25 parcels will increase due to the improvements made to real property. It is akin to replacing your one carport with a three car garage and workshop. Assuming the County Assessor values the new bridge improvements at \$500,000 to \$700,000, property taxes per parcel will increase by \$200 to \$300 per year.

a.

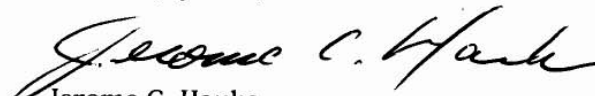
This impact can be mitigated by Alternative Two which places the new bridge in public ownership.

2. The new wider, higher, and safer bridge will present higher "curb appeal" to prospective buyers of property in the Salt Flat subdivision. The entrance to the subdivision will be more appealing and less intimidating to flatland urban buyers. A few years of sales at higher prices due to this increased "curb appeal" will trigger a Prop. 13 reassessment of the whole subdivision.

b.

For those Salt Flat residents planning to sell their property in the near future this increase in property values would have a positive impact. For others the resulting increase in property taxes could have a negative impact.

Sincerely yours,

  
 Jerome C. Hauke

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT: 11**

### **Jerome C. Hauke**

11-a: Under Proposition 13, property is reassessed upon partial or whole change in ownership, new construction including removal of buildings, or calamity. Property assessed under Proposition 13 cannot inflate annually more than 2% unless there is a change in ownership. If a change in ownership is made, the reassessment is based on the sale price of the property. Properties subject to Proposition 8 may be reappraised annually when market conditions indicate a reduction in the market value of property, based on comparable sales in the area. There is no provision under California law to increase assessed valuation of properties served by the proposed bridges based solely on the speculative value of an improvement such as a new bridge without a change in ownership.

The Trinity County Assessor's Office (Deanna Bradford, personal communication, 5/27/03) has indicated that if the bridges remain private there will not be an additional assessment (above the annual 2% increase provide by Proposition 13) to the lands upon which the bridges are located, nor will there be a reassessment to the parcels which are served by the proposed action, unless a parcel which was previously unserved by a bridge will now have legal access, which is not the current known situation. Therefore, there would be no need to "mitigate" for increased property taxes as proposed by the commentor, even if CEQA contemplated the mitigation of purely economic impacts, which it does not.

Additionally, it is speculative to assume that building a new bridge at Salt Flat will increase property values. Several Salt Flat residents submitted comments indicating that privacy is a principle component of what they consider the value of their property to be. In the event that a new bridge (public or private) results in additional conflicts with existing land uses, it could devalue the property values for the subdivision properties. Again, however, such an economic effect would not be a matter for evaluation under CEQA, which is concerned with environmental effects.

11-b: As stated in response 11-a above, there will be no reassessment to parcels until there is a change in ownership. There is no such thing as a Proposition 13 reassessment of an entire neighborhood due to "curb appeal" from improvements such as a new bridge. An assumption of increased property values is speculative. Economic impacts such as increased property taxes or increased property values are not considered an environmental impact under the California Environmental Quality Act unless they would result in a physical impact on the environment, which is not the situation at Salt Flat.